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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8240
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3044
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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
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FRIDAY, JULY 20, 2007

In Today's Papers

Election Campaign Heats Up
All papers: Mainstream Vatan reports that as election day approaches, the party leaders become "harsher than ever," highlighting the three main party leaders' remarks. AKP leader PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed that the Parliament "won't be able to do any business if both MHP and DTP win seats;" main opposition party CHP leader Deniz Baykal said "people who were close to the PM in the past, are now attacking Turkish soldiers;" and MHP leader Devlet Bahceli said "AKP is the reason Turkish society is burning -- under AKP rule, every national value was looted and destroyed." Mainstream Milliyet reports that addressing 10,000 people in Isparta, DP leader Mehmet Agar said that if he comes to power, he would have terrorism under control in six month and end it completely in one year, vowing to leave politics if he does not achieve these goals.

Meanwhile, papers report that 200 foreign journalists applied to the Prime Ministry's Press and Publication Directorate for accreditation to follow the elections. This number, reportedly, was only 100 for the 2002 elections.

Turkey-Iraq Relations

Radikal, Milliyet, Sabah, Yeni Safak and others: Liberal Radikal reports that Turkey gave a diplomatic note to Iraq asking for the extradition of PKK terrorist Riza Altun to Turkey. In return, Iraq presented Turkey with a diplomatic note to end military massing at the border and to end artillery fire into Northern Iraq. Milliyet reports that the Iraqi government's spokesman Ali Debbag condemned Turkey for the Turkish military's recent artillery fire into the Dohuk region in Northern Iraq.

Editorial Comment: The US Image in Turkey and Action against the PKK
Columnist Fehmi Koru discusses how the US image in Turkey is

impacted by its failure to take any concrete action against the PKK.

In the Islamist-leaning daily Yeni Safak, he writes: "Regardless of the reasons, the fact of the matter is that the PKK has weapons from the American army. Debating the reasons will not do any good. It may be true that American army deserters were selling those weapons.

Or it may also be true that the Iraqi administration in the north were giving them to the PKK members. No excuse, no explanation, no reason is good enough to soften the fury in people's minds. They can't get beyond the fact that PKK terror against Turkey is carried out with American weapons. Washington does not seem to realize the sensitivities in Turkey, even though the US considers restoring its image a high priority. There is a bureau at the State Department under Karen Hughes which spends hundreds of million dollars to create sympathy toward the US. The rate of anti-Americanism in Turkey is alarmingly high, but the US can reverse this trend so easily if it really wants to [by taking concrete action against the PKK]. However there is no sign of that happening. There are opinions coming from experts on Turkish-American relations who believe that Americans are not considering tangible action against the PKK at the moment because it may work to the benefit of AKP. Therefore such efforts may have been postponed until after the Turkish elections. That means Washington is not taking an action against the most sensitive issue, the PKK, just because it may create a political gain to the AKP in the elections. The Turkish government should have taken note of that."

Diyarbakir Prosecutor's Investigation into former DEP Deputy Leyla Zana

Sabah, Milliyet, Zaman and others: Diyarbakir Chief Public Prosecutor started an investigation into former DEP deputy Leyla Zana for her remark that "our leader is in Imrali" [referring to jailed PKK leader Ocalan], during a speech in Diyarbakir at a rally

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organized for Independent candidates who were supported by DTP.

Meanwhile, Milliyet and Zaman report that speaking in Bingol to support the region's independent candidate, Leyla Zana referred to the southeast of Turkey as "Kurdistan."

Greece Buys Electricity from Turkey

Radikal: The Turkish Energy Minister and Greek Development Minister have signed a barter trade agreement in Ankara. As a first step of the agreement Greece will buy electricity from Turkey in July and August. Turkish Minister Guler also announced that the natural gas pipeline project between Turkey and Greece is about to be concluded, while Greek Minister Sioufas added he hoped to extend the pipeline through Italy in the future.

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

In a meeting with journalists in Kayseri, FM Gul complained that President Sezer was delaying the appointment of a new Secretary General for the National Security Council

87 people have been arrested in connection with election protests held in Ankara on Tuesday.

International News

Russia announced that it was expelling four British Diplomats over the murder case of a former KGB agent in Britain.

More than 30 people were killed in two separate bomb attacks in Pakistan.

Middle East Quartet held its meeting to outline Tony Blair's mission.

WILSON